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AUTHOR Fadale, La Verna M.; Winter, Gene M.
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ABSTRACT

The process of determining the effectiveness of developmental programs in two-year colleges was the focus of this study. It was limited to New York State, and designed in response to a request for proposals issued by Bureau of Grants Administration, New York State Education Department. The need for systematic review of developmental programs and local evaluative practices was motivated by the desire of state-level policy makers to base academic policies and funding decisions on current information. The need for a study was recognized by many local college program staff. The principal focus was determining appropriate evaluation criteria, the extent to which consensus could be reached on a model, criteria and standards for assessing the effectiveness of developmental programs, and the level of effectiveness within these parameters. Project results included identification of success criteria/standards used in evaluation of developmental/remedial programs in New York two-year colleges, development of an evaluation model for developmental/remedial programs, and estimated levels of program success through application of the model. (Author/DWH)

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PROGRAMS IN TWO YEAR COLLEGES

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Dr. LaVerna M. Fadale

Dr. Gene M. Winter

Two-Year College Development Center
State University of New York at Albany
Albany, New York

Abstract

ASSESSING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF DEVELOPMENTAL/REMEDIAL PROGRAMS IN TWO-YEAR COLLEGES

This study focused on the process of determining the effectiveness of developmental programs in two-year colleges. It was limited to New York State, and designed in response to a request for proposals issued by Bureau of Grants Administration, New York State Education Department. The need for systematic review of developmental programs and local evaluative practices was motivated by the desire of state-level policy makers to base academic policies and funding decisions on current information. The need for a study was also recognized by many local college program staff.

The principal focus was determining appropriate evaluation criteria, the extent to which consensus could be reached on a model(s), criteria and standards for assessing the effectiveness of developmental programs, and the level of effectiveness within these parameters. Project results included identification of success criteria/standards used in evaluation of developmental/remedial programs in New York two-year colleges, development of an evaluation model for developmental/remedial programs, and estimated levels of program success through application of the model.

ASSESSING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF DEVELOPMENTAL/REMEDIAL PROGRAMS IN TWO-YEAR COLLEGES

Prologue

The study focused on the process of determining the effectiveness of developmental programs in two-year colleges. It was limited to New York State, and designed in response to a request for proposals from the Bureau of Grants Administration of the New York State Education Department. The need for systematic review of developmental programs and local evaluative practices was motivated by the desire of state-level policy makers to base academic policies and funding decisions on current data.

In addition, the need for a study was recognized by many local college program staff. Interest in the study was especially keen in New York State since regulatory agencies have recently questioned local credit-granting policies and the results or quality of these programs. Both the State University of New York and the Board of Regents have, during the life of this project (1982-84), issued new policy statements and guidelines regarding the operation of developmental programs in New York State two-year colleges.

Objectives

When the project was begun in the fall of 1982, the principal focus was on determining appropriate evaluation criteria, the extent to which consensus could be reached on a model(s), criteria and standards for assessing the effectiveness of developmental programs, and the level of effectiveness within these parameters.

The objectives of the project were:

- to determine extent to which commonalities exist in success criteria/standards used in evaluation of developmental/remedial programs in New York State two-year colleges.
- to develop an evaluation model for developmental/remedial programs.

- to estimate levels of program success through application of the model.

A Perspective

In the earlier years of the community college movement, an important criterion of institutional success was increasing the percentage of the population who participated in some type of organized learning experience sponsored by a college. More recently, success is often being defined as the percentage of the collegiate population qualified for subsequent study or for employment as a result of completing an appropriate educational sequence. Such performance becomes particularly problematic for students lacking basic skills who, as a result, may be prevented from successful completion of programs necessary to compete for many career opportunities. Experience and time have shown that lack of proficiency in basic skills contributes to reduced opportunities regardless of whether a program has or has not been completed (Patterson-Griffith, 1983; Brawer, 1982).

The open-door philosophy of educational service to a community resulted not only in an expansion of enrollment but also of function. Many institutions are still operating under expansion policies which seem to be out of synchronization with current concerns about student achievement and program quality. Knowledgeable observers indicate that public policy will continue to focus on student achievement rather than numbers of participants. Recognizing this, many colleges are beginning, or have already initiated, changes in policy areas to place more emphasis on development and assessment of academic skills and to require evidence of progress (Richardson, 1982).

A recent nation-wide study found that systematic procedures were not yet in place for collection of evaluation data for academic skill programs at colleges across the country. Assessment data collected were found to be limited to performance within the skill courses and did not include evidence

of application in subsequent coursework (Rouche, 1983).

A recent meta-analytic synthesis of evaluation studies of developmental/remedial efforts found negligible effects from community college programs. Resultant effects on student, GPA or persistence rates were undistinguishable from those of comparable students who were enrolled in regular programs. These findings were viewed from two perspectives: 1) because community colleges tend to serve nontraditional students uniquely, traditional yardsticks may not apply; or 2) the developmental/remedial studies offered do not adequately prepare students for subsequent courses (Kulik et al., 1983).

The two-year colleges in New York reflect these concerns of policies and practices found in current research literature. Staff members at New York State postsecondary institutions are posing similar questions to themselves. Many staff members find themselves in positions that demand conflicting actions; promote access but demand excellence, and perform both tasks with a shrinking fiscal base.

Data Source and Methods

The data source in both cycles of this study were two-year college faculty and administrators of developmental programs.

During the first cycle of research, data collection strategies included a statewide survey (N=48 responding colleges, 80% response rate), and in-depth data collection at nine sites serving as a representative sample. Techniques for collecting data included questionnaires, on-site interviews, reaction sheets and telephone consultations.

The second cycle of research was based on results of the previous phase. Data were collected through a statewide follow-up questionnaire (N=32 responding colleges, response rate of 67%); reaction sheets, and in-depth consultations with local staff at research sites. Ten colleges joined the

original nine resulting in 19 colleges providing input as research sites in the second cycle.

In addition to formal data collection procedures, staff from 19 research sites were invited to serve as a project Task Force. The purpose of the Task Force was to discuss major issues that emerged from data, to determine the extent to which a consensus might be reached regarding each of the areas, and to make recommendations appropriate to each issue. As a result, 31 two-year college staff members met as a Task Force on two occasions to address as a group: 1) terminology, 2) factors and issues influencing program evaluation, and 3) criteria and standards appropriate to program assessment.

Results and Findings

Program Profiles

In contrast to the findings of an earlier statewide study (Fadale & Winter, 1976), developmental/remedial efforts are viewed less as discrete "departments" than was the case during the middle 1970's. A separate segment of the curriculum specifically defined as a developmental or remedial program has declined in frequency while courses based in departments have increased. In many cases a program coordinator exists for writing, reading (or English), and/or math. The duties of the "coordinator" may also be linked to a learning center, learning laboratory or other supportive activity. Learning centers are common and generally viewed as supportive or supplemental academic services. A faculty unit set apart from other academic departments with a coordinator or chairperson of developmental studies for the total college is becoming an exception rather than the rule. Faculty for developmental/remedial courses are based in departments at 52% of responding colleges, a combination of department-based and separate remedial faculty at 37.5%, and separate developmental/remedial faculty at 16.6%.

All (100%) of the responding institutions offer writing, 98.5% reading, 95.6% mathematics, and 60.4% identify "other courses" with a developmental/remedial focus. Several colleges identified study skills as part of remedial courses or learning center offerings. Other frequently noted courses dealt with personal psychology, career development, orientation to college or a specific career content area. In a few instances, these courses carried credit or college equivalent credit but the majority were non-credit. Formats included formal coursework, personalized study at learning centers, modules or variations of all three.

The primary delivery system of instruction to overcome basic skill deficiencies was identified as traditional course format. The laboratory or learning center supports coursework and provides an open-ended entry or re-entry point once courses are completed. The small percentage indicating use of modules suggests that they are incidental alternatives to personalized drill or skills practice.

Reading courses are reported as credit-bearing at 45.6% of responding colleges, non-credit at 41.3%, college equivalent credit at 4.3%, and in combination at 8.8%. In comparison, writing courses carry credit at 31.2% of the colleges, non-credit at 31.2%, college equivalent credit at 25% and in combination at 12.6%. Math resembles writing in that 33.3% of the colleges report credit, 39.5% non-credit, 22.9% college-equivalent and 4.3% in some combination. The frequency of programs with credit-bearing courses has been declining in the past few years.

Of the responding colleges, 87.5% report entrance criteria to be in place. These criteria include results of placement tests (56.2%), high school records (29.1%), or general aptitude tests such as SAT or ACT (12.5%). Fifty percent of the programs report mandatory placement, 25% recommended placement, and 25% rely on student decisions for enrollment. Re-testing during initial class

periods to verify original placement was specifically indicated by 25%. (This percentage may be misleading since this technique was informally reported as general practice to verify placement decisions.)

Of the responding colleges, 98% indicated that exit criteria exist, and 83.3% designate course requirements as exit criteria--if a student "passes the course" exit criteria are met. In 45.7% of the programs post-tests serve as exit criteria, 34.1% combine post-testing with course requirements, and 8.3% report retesting--re-administer a test to determine whether or not a previously identified deficiency has been overcome.

The apparent increase in existence of entrance/exit criteria and systematic testing for placement in New York State over the past five years compares favorably to the trend reported by Cross (1982). There appears to be much less hesitancy now than previously in requiring students to not only take tests, but also to follow-up and mandate required study. Establishing entrance and exit criteria may be a step toward determination of competence levels needed to succeed in career courses which has been noted as a critical lack (Brawer, 1982).

Testing for Placement. The majority of entrance criteria are linked to placement testing. Instruments used by colleges range from locally developed instruments which establish cut-off scores and placement decisions based on faculty judgment to standardized instruments with specific grade levels, percentiles or deciles designated as indicators for placement at corresponding remediation levels.

Tests identified for reading, writing and math are listed with indicators of frequency of use and an array of sample cut-off scores:

Placement Tests Used: *

Reading

<u>Test</u>	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>Cut-Off Score</u>
Nelson Denny	12	10.0
Stanford Diagnostic	5	34-38
California Achievement Test		40th percentile, 9 grade
Stanford Task II	3	40th percentile, 10 decile
CUNY Tests		30
Descriptive Tests of Language Skills		varies
Comparative Guidance, CEEB	2	20th percentile
SRA		
GPG Placement, ETS		10th percentile
Cloze	1	percentile
CGP		varies
URP		

Writing

<u>Test</u>	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>Cut-Off Score</u>
Local sample	19	faculty judgment
CUNY-WAT		B+
TSWE	3	35-39
CAT		40th percentile
CGP		
GPG		
McGraw-Hill Writing	2	63
Task II		10th percentile
College Board Written Expression		
Descriptive Tests Language Skills		

Math

<u>Test</u>	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>Cut-Off Score</u>
Local inhouse	17	faculty judgment
Descriptive Tests of Math Skills	4	18-23
CUNY (FSAT)	4	25
CAT	3	
Task		10th decile
CGP		
College Board Tests of Math	2	
GPG		25th percentile
MAA		
Stanford Diagnostic		
Occupational test		

*As reported in Phase I, 1983.

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Identifying Priority Criteria and Program Success

As part of Phase I data collection, coordinator:/staff from responding colleges were asked to describe major criteria used locally to evaluate program success. Each was asked to identify, in order of priority, the top three criteria for the respective programs. Frequency of response and weighted priority scores are presented in Figure 1.

Over 70% identified successful completion of exit criteria for developmental/remedial courses as a major program criterion and about 40% a first priority. The second most frequently (50.5%) identified criterion was successful completion of the regular program course in sequence after the developmental course. About 25% chose this as a second level priority. The third most frequently (47.9%) identified criterion was completion or graduation from a career program, with about 30% selecting this as a third level priority.

Other frequently selected criteria included academic status/standing or grade point average at the conclusion of the first semester subsequent to completion of the developmental/remedial courses (33.3%), academic eligibility to continue in chosen program (27.1%), and achievement of goals held by individual students (25%).

When the priority is weighted (first = 4, second = 3, third = 2, checked = 1)*, scores correlate with percentage frequency with but one exception. Demonstrated increase in student motivation to achieve (#7) exchanges position with successful completion of career course requirements at a series of time points subsequent to remedial courses (#8).

The top three criteria are not affected by weighting scores but apparently fall into a sequence of first, second and third levels. Program coordinators/staff can be expected to view the more immediate successful completion of course exit requirements as a primary or first level indicator.

* Checked criteria were given a 1 weighting because of multiple responses and judgment of priority could not be made.

Figure 1

Summary and Priority of Success Criteria Selected
by Program Coordinators/Staff

Criteria	% Frequency Selection	Frequency of Priority Selection:				Weighted Priority Score *
		1	2	3	checked	
Successful completion of exit criteria for developmental/remedial courses.	70.8	18	6	7	3	107
Successful completion of the college level course immediately subsequent to the developmental course (such as college level English immediately after developmental writing).	50.0	4	11	6	3	62
Completion or graduation from career program.	47.9	6	2	12	3	57
Academic status/standing and/or grade point average at the conclusion of the first semester subsequent to completion of developmental/remedial courses.	33.3	2	9	3	2	43
Academic eligibility to continue in chosen program.	27.1	5	3	3	2	37
Achievement of the goal(s) held by individual students when enrolling.	25.0	4	3	2	3	32
Demonstrated increase in student's motivation to achieve.	20.8	1	3	4	2	23
Successful completion of career course requirements at a series of time points after completion of developmental/remediation courses.	18.7	3	3	1	2	25
A positive attitude towards self-directed learning and reading/writing for personal enjoyment.	18.7	2	1	2	4	19
Withdrawal at various points due to a conscious decision to terminate or change academic plans, even though academically eligible to continue.	8.3	0	1	1	2	7
Other: application of skills to content courses.	2.1	1	-	-	-	4

N = 48 colleges

*Priority 1 = 4

2 = 3

3 = 2

✓ = 1

The second level criterion is essentially the next step for students-- completion of the next course in sequence. Examples include: a composition course subsequent to remedial writing, or college algebra or accounting course following developmental math. This next course becomes a second level indicator of success.

The third level criterion is more long-term--the capability of students to successfully apply skills learned in remedial/developmental courses to career courses generally. Applications of basic skills once judged as deficient become indicators of success for the developmental program.

Terminology

Terminology used to describe programs was found in the first cycle to vary from campus to campus and often lacked clarity of meaning among individuals who used the same terms--even though there appeared to be some sense of distinction among practitioners. As a result Phase II follow-up sought to determine the most accurate term for local programs:

<u>Preferred Terminology</u>	<u>Frequency</u>
• Developmental	61.3%
• Remedial	20.0%
• Basic Skills Education	16.6%
• Academic Skills Education	16.6%

(20% provided multiple responses)

The majority selected "developmental" as an umbrella term and was usually preferred to describe local program/courses. However, 20% checked more than one term. The following comments are representative of rationales given for selections and serve to convey a sense of distinction among terms.

- Students exhibit a variety of deficiencies. Some require remediation, others development of skills which minimally exceed postsecondary levels. Some courses cover both remedial and standard college level work.

- The program (which is basic skills instruction) serves the student in a wide range of skill development levels; some remedial and others developmental.
- Basic skills are directed specifically to college work and survival in college.
- Although our program moves toward basic skills education, development of higher cognitive abilities (such as abstract thinking, reasoning and expanding awareness) are part of the program.
- Courses are college-credit bearing but taught at a slower pace and with support.
- The program mixes pre-college and college-level materials accompanied by extensive efforts to improve self-concept and motivation.
- If pre-collegiate non-credit use remediation; then college-level skill courses use developmental.
- Developmental since our program takes students at their entry level and moves them to college level--but it is a basic skills program as well.
- Academic skills are largely remedial but study skills are developmental.
- Although entitled basic education, academic skills is more appropriate.
- Emphasis on developing and maintaining skills continues throughout sequence.
- It is difficult to separate these at times but feel there is little hope of truly remediating, thus chose the more inclusive category.
- Students develop skills to move into college courses.
- All three terms have the same meaning.

Although specific definition of the terms may continue as an issue, practitioners generally tend to distinguish among terms relative to level of student deficiency. Because of the qualified acceptance of "developmental" as a general umbrella term, the term developmental is used in the remainder of this paper to designate these programs.

Success Criteria and Standards

Data collected in Phase I (page 9, Figure 1) resulted in identification of criteria selected most often as appropriate to assessing local developmental programs. Verification was sought in the second cycle resulting in the following judged as most appropriate:

<u>Criteria</u>	<u>Very appropriate to college program</u>	<u>Moderately appropriate to college program</u>	<u>Somewhat appropriate to college program</u>	<u>Not appropriate</u>	<u>Mean Rating</u>
1. Achieving exit criteria of basic skill courses	48.3%	29.0%	3.2%	6.4%	3.4
2. Academic eligibility to continue program as indicated by completion of next regular course in sequence to developmental/remedial/basic skill courses	35.4%	19.3%	9.6%	19.3%	2.7
3. Completion or graduation from career program	16.1%	38.7%	12.9%	16.1%	2.6
4. Achievement of individual student goals	32.2%	38.7%	3.2%	9.6%	3.0

N = 32 (percentages include multiple responses)

Since all four criteria were rated as appropriate in some degree to local programs, the selection frequencies of "very appropriate" and "moderately appropriate" were combined resulting in the following listing or priority order of selection:

<u>Criteria</u>	<u>% Choosing as Appropriate (Very/Moderately) to Program</u>
1. Achieving exit criteria or basic skill courses	77.3%
2. Achievement of individual student goals	71.0%
3. Completion or graduation from career program	54.8%
4. Academic eligibility to continue program as indicated by completion of next regular course in sequence to developmental/ remedial/basic skill courses	54.8%

N = 32 (percentages include multiple responses)

A consensus on general criteria is evident however since all four criteria are perceived appropriate to some degree for a majority of programs, priority/primary emphasis for any single campus program must be related to local program goals and differences in priority may occur.

Standards. Phase I results indicated that few evaluation standards existed within a policy context. Program staff were often able to describe success criteria but were less sure of how to quantify success. The second cycle survey requested reactions regarding: a) the existence of standards, and b) opinions of three statements related to standards. The results are summarized as follows:

a) Existence of standards--

• Existence of success standard for college:

- 80.6% yes
- 3.2% no
- 6.4% yes and no
- 3.2% don't know
- 6.6% no response

• Existence of success standard for basic skills/
developmental/remedial program:

- 67.7% yes
- 22.5% no
- 6.4% don't know
- 3.4% no response

	<u>Agree</u>	<u>Disagree</u>	<u>Mixed Feeling</u>	<u>No Response</u>
b) Institutions should establish collegewide success standards which could then serve as the basis for evaluating specific programs such as basic skills/developmental/remedial.	58.1%	16.1%	16.1%	9.7%
Performance standards can be set for developmental/remedial/basic skills programs that will be acceptable academically, socially, and politically.	45.2%	6.4%	38.7%	9.7%
General standards or guidelines for assessing the effectiveness of developmental/remedial programs at different colleges should be established given the range and variability of student needs found at New York State two-year institutions.	64.5%	3.2%	25.8%	6.5%

The majority opinion, (64.5%) indicated that general standards or guidelines for assessing program effectiveness should be established. Open-ended comments however not only raised negative cautions and doubts as to its feasibility but also suggested possible application and benefits of such guidelines. Agreement by many (58.1%) was reached regarding institutions establishing college-wide success standards which would then serve as a basis for evaluating developmental programs. Again open-ended comments pointed to inherent problems such as program differences and isolation, as well as positive aspects such as student motivation, bases of comparison and necessity for effective evaluation. The greatest variance of opinion was expressed regarding performance standards for developmental programs. Conflicting

opinions were highlighted in comments regarding lack of standards for other academic programs, feasibility of reaching agreement and fallout from attempting such an effort.

To further specify potential standards within the four general criteria, respondents were asked to indicate, if possible and appropriate, a performance level that might be acceptable for their respective programs. The tentative nature of these responses must be acknowledged as well as their relation to local program goals, but these data serve as indicators of current attitudes. For each criterion, the frequency of selection for each standard plus the frequency of measurements used within each standard are summarized:

• Criterion #1 - (achieve exit criteria of courses)

<u>f</u>	<u>standard</u>	<u>f</u>	<u>measurement</u>
41.9%	as many students as possible----->	69.2%	posttest score
		53.8%	classroom activities
		16.1%	lab assignments
		16.1%	course grade
		16.1%	cum average
30.8%	75% of students----->	75.0%	posttest score
		66.7%	classroom activities
		25.0%	complete course
		25.0%	course grade
9.7%	50% of students----->	33.3%	exit interview
		33.3%	posttest score
		33.3%	exit exam
6.5%	40% of students----->	50.0%	posttest score
		50.0%	specific exit criteria
3.2%	5% of students----->	100.0%	exit criteria
7.9%	(no response)		

(Note: multiple measurements will cause percentages to exceed 100%.)

• Criterion #2 - (achieve individual goals)

<u>f</u>	<u>standard</u>	<u>f</u>	<u>measurement</u>
32.2%	as many students as possible-----	80.0%	percentage of students achieving goal
		20.0%	percentage of students achieving goal in specified time period
		10.0%	academic progress/career choice
6.4%	75% of students-----	100.0%	percentage of students achieving goal
3.2%	40% of students-----	100.0%	percentage of students achieving goal
58.2%	(no response)		

• Criterion #3 - (completion/graduation of program)

<u>f</u>	<u>standard</u>	<u>f</u>	<u>measurement</u>
25.8%	as many students as possible-----	75.0%	graduation rate
		37.5%	graduation rate within specified time period
16.1%	40% of students-----	20.0%	graduation rate
		80.0%	graduation rate within specified time period
6.5%	50% of students-----	100.0%	graduation rate
3.2%	75% of students-----	100.0%	graduation rate
3.2%	30% of students-----	100.0%	graduation rate
3.2%	depends on overall rate-----	100.0%	graduation rate
42.0%	(no response)		

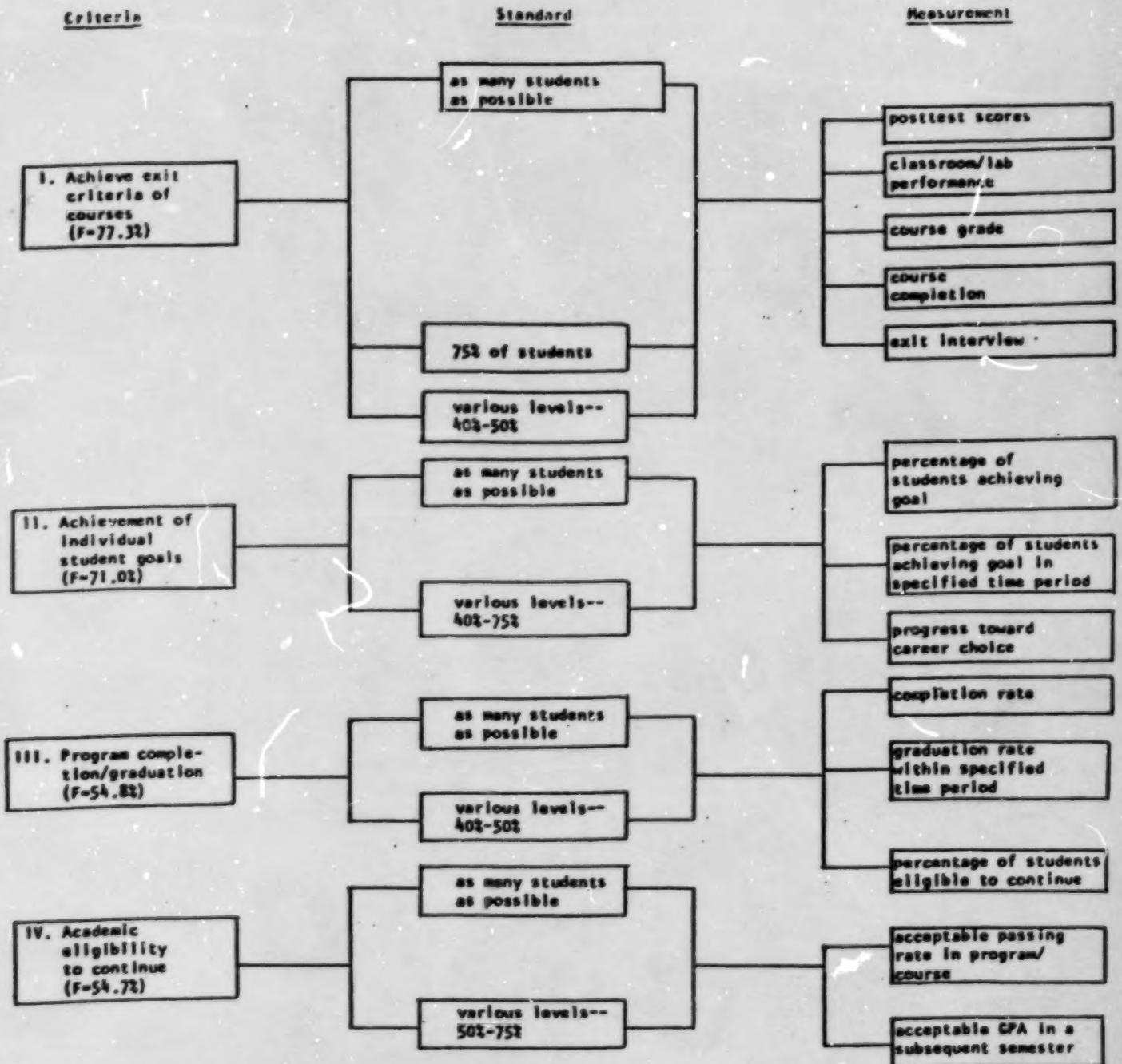
• Criterion #4 - (academic eligibility)

<u>f</u>	<u>standard</u>	<u>f</u>	<u>measurement</u>
45.1%	as many students as possible-----	57.1%	eligible to continue
		42.8%	favorable passing rate
			in program course
		21.4%	favorab's GPA in a
			subsequent semester
		7.1%	GPA as defined
12.9%	75% of students-----	50.0%	favorable GPA in a
			subsequent semester
		50.0%	favorable passing rate
			in program sequence
		25.0%	eligible to continue
9.7%	50% of students-----	66.7%	favorable GPA in a
			subsequent semester
		33.4%	favorable passing rate
			in a program sequence
6.5%	85%/90% of students---	100.0%	eligible to continue
		50.0%	favorable GPA in a
			subsequent semester
3.2%	40% of students-----	100.0%	eligible to continue
22.6%	(no response)		

Evaluation Paradigm

Phase II data resulted in verification of four basic criteria appropriate to evaluation of developmental programs, a range of standards within those criteria, and relevant measurement strategies which provide the basis for one or more evaluation models, depending on local program goals. Each criterion, its standards and measurements might be considered as one area to emphasize; combinations would constitute a more comprehensive framework for evaluation. In any application, each college should be able to make the necessary adjustments in concept and strategy as appropriate to each program, and to the existence of local college-wide standards. The following model provides a structure within which the variance of local purposes may be effectively addressed.

EVALUATION MODEL



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Model Application. Part of the data collection process involved sharing of assessments performed at research sites. Based on descriptions and outcomes of evaluative strategies undertaken at these sites, it became apparent that local applications of the model were operational with selected results of these efforts reflected in the following outcome statements:

- The proportion of students achieving developmental skill course exit criteria exceeds the proportion who fail.
- Students who successfully complete a developmental skill program or set of courses usually achieve a subsequent success rate which is comparable to the overall success rate of the college.
- Students who do not successfully complete the developmental courses are more likely to fail in subsequent regular courses.
- Developmental students who achieve success in a subsequent semester of regular or mainstreamed courses are more likely to achieve success with each succeeding successful semester.
- Most developmental students require a minimum of 2 1/2-3 years to complete a degree.
- Increasingly, developmental programs are attempting to incorporate specific and/or prerequisite skills necessary to function in career content areas, and are doing so through peer content faculty cooperation.
- Pre and post-testing, using the respective placement tests, usually result in gain scores for a majority of students who meet exit criteria.
- Students initiating self-referral for additional work demonstrate a higher overall success rate than students who do not seek additional help.

Task Force Outcomes. Two meetings of Task Force members resulted in consensus statements within three general problem areas (terminology, factors and issues influencing program evaluation, criteria/standards appropriate to program assessment) and related concerns to the problem areas. The Task Force process was viewed as beginning a network that could be continued by professional developmental educators in New York State. The following summary statements reflect degree and consensus of recommended actions.

- Clarity of terminology may be crucial in certain contexts such as grant activities, official communication and print statements related to regulations or policies regarding programs. A consensus in the use of terms would facilitate communication and understanding between campuses. However, there are factors which deter consensus; the tendencies of programs to contain elements of both remedial and developmental and the existence of extreme variance in program goals and clientele among campuses. A general sense exists that if some degree of consensus is not provided by the field, definition and interpretations could well be superimposed externally. Further, a need for clarity of terminology was seen in order to promote understanding of policies set forth by regulatory agencies under which programs must operate--State Education Department, State University of New York and others. As a result the terms developmental and remedial were defined as follows:

Developmental

Several suggested that a program is developmental if its major goal is improvement of academic skills to a level that permits successful completion of mainstream career courses. These programs consist of ongoing processes which lead to the acquisition of skills necessary to accomplish the tasks of learning. Developmental programs deal with students at any point of need and often extend beyond academic skills to include coping skills and decision making about life-direction and purpose. Such programs might use a variety of instructional and counseling strategies such as tutoring, advisement, modules and directed and independent study at learning centers.

Thus, developmental programs were defined as those efforts designed to elevate, in a relatively short period of time, academic skills to a level that allows successful completion of college-level career courses.

Remedial

A program is viewed as remedial when its major intent is assistance to students with deficiencies in academic skills which prohibit functioning in college level career courses or programs. The educational effort increases skill competencies to enable students to achieve a minimum entry level for beginning college-level career courses. Some perceive the competency level related not only to beginning technical courses, but also selected developmental courses.

Thus, remedial programs were viewed as instructional efforts designed to ameliorate deficiencies in academic skills to a level of satisfying minimum entry requirements of college career programs.

- If programs have to be labeled, the consensus was for use of developmental as an umbrella term with specification through goals and objectives of each respective program. In general, remedial was viewed less favorably as a term relative to college programming since, given current conditions, remediation according to some definitions, should not be addressed at collegiate levels. There was also some concern that perhaps the philosophical or pedagogical use of some terms had been lost to a priority on procedural or economic solutions to current problems.
- A variety of factors and issues which impinge on evaluation practices and processes were acknowledged such as budget procedures, student demographics, college structure, intent/use and application of data and variety of assessment tools used. These factors are a consideration of any evaluation and must be dealt with as realistically as possible through recognition and incorporation of the factors in a proactive meaningful manner. No evaluation is conducted in a vacuum.
- The criteria and standards identified by survey data are acceptable to a degree--up to the point of need for local flexibility in use and interpretation. Specific local program evaluations should incorporate a statement of clear local goals with the specific evaluation processes, criteria and standards stemming from these goal statements.
- A partial consensus on program standards was reached and was generally defined as the capability of developmental students to function at the same level as nondevelopmental students in chosen degree career courses subsequent to completion of a developmental program to overcome skill deficiencies. The four criteria (achieve exit criteria, academic eligibility to continue, completion of program, achievement of individual student goals) are essentially components of this general success statement.
- Local programs and institutions should quantify and document, as well as identify projected competencies rather than describe program intent in global terms. Specification will eventually lead to better understanding by local faculty, administration and sponsoring agencies. With understanding comes a greater degree of acceptance, expanded institutional support and increased success potential when coupled with appropriate evidence supporting results.
- There was general acknowledgment that some students are admitted with deficiencies so severe that one or two semesters will not prepare them to function effectively in college level courses. Thus, while colleges agree generally, assessment specifics will vary and local flexibility based on goals, clientele and local college standards must be allowed.
- Interested professionals should continually be aware of and consider all policy statements, and to the extent possible, help each other by facilitating dissemination of information that might be to each other's benefit.

Conclusions and Summary

The research effort set out to determine commonalities in success criteria and standards, to develop an evaluation model, and to estimate the level of program success through application of the model. The general conclusions are subsequently summarized.

- Consensus on terminology was sought to more accurately distinguish among programs, and to determine whether agreement could be reached regarding the use of terms. In general, developmental was preferred by a majority. However, this preference was tempered for use as an umbrella term only. It was generally perceived that other terms such as remedial and basic skills may be part of a developmental effort with each addressing a different level of deficiency or instructional objective.
- Local efforts to design and implement systematic collection of relevant data and evaluation processes are increasing. The necessity of a clear, specific statement of local program goals to guide any evaluation is recognized by most two-year college personnel. At any one college, the evaluation process may be found at various stages of development and refinement that reflect local needs and issues.
- The project resulted in the identification of four primary evaluation criteria (course exit criteria, individual goals, program completion, academic eligibility) and suggested standards within those criteria that might serve as a framework for local program prescription of an appropriate evaluation effort. The criteria tend to establish categories of both short and longer term assessment points that have the potential for use in formative and summative evaluation. The need for local flexibility to accurately reflect local program goals and objectives was underscored. The general intent of the criteria and the initial attempt to set or identify potential standards are seen as positive steps toward providing a framework for planning. Thus the model(s) developed from these criteria and standards is viewed positively as long as right of local modification remains a part of that model.
- In the attempt to provide a basis for comparison to a college-wide standard, or other standards external to the program, project efforts sought to determine the existence of such standards. Highlighting their presence or their lack thereof served to facilitate consideration of success indicators beyond those stemming from the content of developmental courses only.
- Staff members continue to recognize the correlation of client capability to program success. Too, concerns remain regarding expectations held for programs by others given the range of

deficiencies and multiple needs of students. Thus, there is reluctance to highlight success data in isolation from a comparative base. Often results are more positive than might be perceived if compared to college-wide performance or other comparable group performance.

- Placement testing provides data which helps to identify the range of deficiencies exhibited by students thereby establishing a baseline profile from which to measure the elements of success. It also provides a basis for identifying students with extreme deficiencies. The expectations of success for these students may need to be adjusted when evaluation criteria are established.
- There is general acceptance that success is best indicated by the level of performance in courses subsequent to the successful completion of the developmental program. The implementation of tracking systems, monitoring of course grades at various time points and recording of frequency of services provided, in addition to ongoing computerized records kept by individual colleges, combine to serve as a comprehensive data base that can be used to assess success of individual students and the program itself. However some staff time and expense is necessary to change the potential into a reality and that extra allocation is usually the first to go when budget reductions occur.

Closing Statement

The intentions of the project were to discover, understand and describe in order to contribute to future practice and policy considerations in a context of changing regulations and expectations. It would have been easier to simply observe and critique.

While there is strong consensus on evaluative criteria there is less on evaluative standards. An acceptable success rate, however defined, is like many colleges' reaction to retention rates; the goal is to increase retention rather than accept an arbitrary percentage as a standard of performance.

Less than a majority of the colleges perform systematic comprehensive program evaluations, but nearly all are continually engaged in assessing effectiveness of segments of their programs or courses. Staff continually search for the more effective test, method or combination of resources. Many program staff do not have the time or institutional power to mount a comprehensive evaluation be-

cause of the complex interaction of variables and the scope of the information that would be required.

It is generally recognized by program staff that there are students who possess skill deficiencies at levels that cannot be adequately addressed, and perhaps should not be, at the college level. Yet they will continue to be admitted and attempts will be made to help them succeed even though the program was not designed for students with such extreme deficiencies. While most two-year college developmental program staff continually seek to improve programs and illustrate their successes through local evaluation reports when resources are available, they also recognize the presence of issues that can only be addressed not solved, of questions that can be discussed but not answered and of actions which must be taken but not necessarily embraced. Developmental programs are important but not the highest priority when support questions are decided. Staff feel that general college standards of success may exist but become elusive when they seek to apply them to their programs that enroll the higher risk students.

There is no doubt that in the future, most local staff will continue to try to improve programs and address as many of the impinging factors as is possible given the context the scope of their mission, support levels, and the characteristics of the clientele they serve. There is also little doubt that they will never be as successful as they and their critics would have them be.

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- Assessment of Effectiveness: Developmental Programs in Postsecondary Occupational Education, September 1983.
- Assessment of Effectiveness: Developmental Programs in Postsecondary Occupational Education, Phase II, September 1984.
- Assessment of Developmental Programs for Postsecondary Occupational Students: A Task Force Report, September 1984.